

Common Council met immediately following the Water Utility Board on the above date in the Meeting Room at City Hall Annex with Mayor Knowles presiding and members Askren, Tucker, and Angel attending. Councilmen Rueger and Cooper were not present. Others attending were Attorney Funkhouser; Comm. Gray; Chief Beloit; Vicki Cannato; Nancy Burns - SWIRDC; Mr. Moore; Larry Williams; Elaine Springer; Winter Maynard; Mary Ann Watson; Mrs. Nancy Case; Beth Foster - Mount Vernon Democrat; Jamie Grabert - Posey County News; Sarah Apple; - Posey County Humane Society; and Phyllis Ripplemeier - Posey County Humane Society.

Mayor Knowles called the meeting to order by stating members had been mailed or hand carried copies of the minutes of their previous meeting, along with those from the Special Meeting on the 9th of March. She then stated, the Council may approve the minutes of the Special Session, but Mr. Janak of Bose McKinney has suggested some revisions to the others and after those revisions are made, new sets will be sent to the Council for approval at the next meeting.

Councilman Angel moved the minutes of the Special Meeting be approved as presented. Seconded by Councilman Tucker.

Mayor Knowles stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, she reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Knowles stated they will now hear the reports of the Standing Committees.

Street & Light Chairwoman Askren stated she has no report.

Comm. Gray reported they have been busy on maintenance to buildings, vehicles, etc., and have started laying out the alley on Canal Street. He then stated Council may notice around town the storm sewer covers, they are working on a new design for those, as well as working on areas where water stands on a continuous basis. He then stated they have been trimming trees and painting City Hall.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Police & Dog Chairman Tucker stated he has no report.

Chief Beloit stated he has no report.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Fire Chairman Rueger was not present.

Mayor Knowles stated Chief Webber spoke with her before the meeting, he has training this evening, but he had no report. She then asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Sewer Chairman Angel stated he has no report.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Mayor Knowles stated they have the Financial Report and any questions could be directed to Clerk-Treasurer Wolfe.

Mayor Knowles asked if the Clerk-Treasurer had any Communications for the Council ?

Clerk-Treasurer Wolfe replied not at this time.

Mayor Knowles stated on the Legal portion of the Agenda is the first reading of the ordinance to rezone 804 Walnut Street from RM (Residential Multi-Family) to RS (Residential Single Family). She added the rezoning request was approved by the Area Plan Commission.

Councilman Tucker agreed it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Burns stated after that meeting she was surprised to learn, as many others were, that many areas of Mount Vernon are zoned Multi-Family.

Mayor Knowles stated the problem with that zoning is that if a resident would sell a nice older home, it could very easily be turned into apartments, even in the historical areas, and that can lower property values. She added Ms. Burns should be commended for her efforts and for her out of pocket expense to have her own zoning changed.

Councilwoman Askren moved the ordinance to rezone 804 Walnut from RM to RS be passed on first reading. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles requested a roll call vote.

Roll was called by the Clerk-Treasurer with Council voting as follows:

Askren - yes; Tucker - yes; Rueger - absent;

Angel - yes; Cooper - absent.

Mayor Knowles stated the motion carried.

Attorney Funkhouser stated the next item is an amendment to the Section 150, Building Regulations, of the Mt. Vernon Code of Ordinances. He reminded the Council they spoke about this at the last meeting and really refers to unsafe buildings and giving the building commissioner the ability to go after unsafe buildings that are not just residences. He stated it will open the door to the commercial buildings in the area. He added the first paragraph is really what was changed and Letter C is all relatively still the same. He added again, that the purpose is to be able to go after many of the vacant commercial buildings in

town as well.

Mayor Knowles stated she agreed totally with this ordinance and added that these areas need addressed, they should be giving fair treatment to all, residences and commercial buildings. She then asked if there were any questions ?

Councilwoman Askren moved the ordinance pass first reading. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles requested a roll call vote.

Roll was called by the Clerk-Treasurer with Council voting as follows:

Askren - yes; Tucker - yes; Rueger - absent;

Angel - yes; Cooper - absent.

Mayor Knowles stated the motion carried.

Mayor Knowles asked if anyone in the Audience wished to address the Council ?

There was no response.

Mayor Knowles stated under New Business, Nancy Burns is present tonight with a presentation.

Ms. Burns stated she had previously been with the Posey County Chamber of Commerce, but is now employed by the Southwestern Indiana Redevelopment Commission and the two in conjunction received a grant in which the chamber provided the 20% in-kind match for a Housing Needs Assessment Survey. She stated the survey was sent out to the general public and to various bankers, realtors, etc. She added that after the results were gathered they would meet for recommended plans on what they discovered. One example was a good program were law enforcement officials are able to purchase homes at more affordable prices. Some other highlights from the survey were that there were 11,398 established housing units in the county in 2003, 1,972 residents were also living below the poverty level, and 9.4% of kids in the county were living in poverty. She stated that between the years of 1995-2000, 64.9% of folks lived in the same house and did not move; Posey County has one Habitat house; Posey County is aging and getting older as a community with 37.4% being elderly, above the state average; northern Posey County seems to have the most poverty; southwestern Posey County has the most in terms of income; Posey County has many single fathers with kids under the age of 18 living in poverty; Posey County has 8,300 residents with disabilities; Mount Vernon being the county seat, has over 300 folks between the ages of 18-64 that are living below the poverty line. She added that 461 folks are living in poverty in the county, and 233 of those are in Mount Vernon. She stated as well, that rental situations were looked at and there were 1,860 owner/occupied situations, with the age on them being folks 85 and older. She also added 575 homes were studied in Mount Vernon: 163 were in good shape; 264 needed minor repairs; 75 needed major repairs; 13 were condemnable, and the others were either empty or were mobile homes. She also stated that 70% of homes in Mount Vernon needed major repairs; New Harmony was in good condition;

Poseyville has well kept, nice homes; Cyntiana was a mix; and Griffin was in bad shape.

Ms. Burns continued by stating there is a Posey County Housing Advisory Commission being formed, with a meeting scheduled for April 6th at the Western Hills Country Club at 11:30 am. She stated anyone interested should feel free to attend and they will be discussing the results of the survey, their objectives, etc. She added they will hopefully select projects for the entire county to get involved in. She concluded by stating the participation of the entire county would be great, these are important issues for everyone and she hopes many people get on board.

Mary Ann Watson stated the April 6th meeting is on a Wednesday, and therefore, teachers, who know what the kids in the community need and are going through, would not be able to attend. She wondered if they may next time set a more convenient time to include them.

Ms. Burns agreed and added that at this point, they needed to start somewhere. She did state however, they have a pretty diverse group attending. She added they do need everyone's input.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions or comments ?

Ms. Burns states the Council and general public as well should all look at the zoning issues in Mount Vernon - Councilman Tucker being now on the Area Plan Commission did not know that his own home, in the Historic area of town, was zoned multi-family. She added hopefully these issues of zoning can be addressed and changed.

Ms. Case stated she learned recently from a discussion with Ms. Butler at the APC, that it is possible to do a one-time "block zoning" and rezone many homes at one time (for example from RM to RS), without the fee for doing so.

Mayor Knowles agreed she had also heard of that and they would all be surprised at how many people look at older towns like Mount Vernon and see all the big older homes they could buy up and turn into apartments. She added the bottom line to all of this is she and the Council and Ms. Burns are trying to protect the integrity of neighborhoods. She then thanked Ms. Burns for her presentation and asked for any questions or comments.

There were none.

Mayor Knowles asked if there was any Old Business ?

There was none.

Mayor Knowles asked if there was any New Business ?

There was none.

Mayor Knowles stated they will now hear the reports of the Districts.

1st District Councilwoman Askren stated she has no report.

2nd District Councilman Tucker stated he would like to commend Comm. Gray for a problem he has been working on with him for several weeks now - truck problems on N. Main Street. He added he is working on it.

Mayor Knowles stated she is aware of what they are talking about and added that a western by-pass, or connector would help immensely as there would no longer be truck on Grant Street.

Councilman Tucker agreed and added that when the streets were built years ago, they were not designed for the truck traffic of today.

3rd District Councilman Rueger was not present.

4th District Councilman Angel stated he has no report.

Councilman-at-Large Cooper was not present.

Mayor Knowles stated if there were no further business, she entertains a motion to adjourn.

Councilman Tucker moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, she reported the motion carried unanimously and adjourned the meeting.

Rosemary L. Knowles

Mayor

ATTEST: